1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1955 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

114
128 the *molimo*.[1] I was particularly fortunate in obtaining the material I did, and I include it because it helps to fill out the most detailed body of facts available on any single Pygmy hunting band. The fact that all this material does deal with a single band (or is used only in so far as it does) perhaps excuses the somewhat haphazard way in which it has been amassed. Obviously a single field study by one trained anthropologist would be preferable, but it is not available. Inclusion here of the notes on my 1957–1958 field trip would create an imbalance. As it is, the material is used only in the presentation of facts, and there is no reason to doubt their authenticity. If there is any fault in this joint source on the Epulu Mbuti, it is this possible fault of omission rather than any of commission.

101
131
621 The area that this band of Pygmies hunts lies to the north of the Epulu River and west of

[192] [1] Much confusion arises through common and loose usage of the term *kumama* among all villagers of the area. The *kumama*, also *ntumbu*, seems to originate as an Ngwana magical ceremony. This is distinct from both the Bira *molimo* and the *molimo* of the Mbuti, although the terms are often used interchangeably by villagers.

[P. 158-B]

I: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

without religion. From the descriptions given by the few writers who mention the existence of "spirit houses" and "temples," it may well be that these in fact belonged to villagers. The style of construction described by Geil (1905), for instance, is certainly Bantu. None of these sources offers any acceptable evidence that the Mbuti used these spirit houses and temples.

Schebesta, from the outset of his first visit to the Ituri, was convinced that the Mbuti had a religious system. He finally concluded that it comprised the notion of a dynamic but personal divinity, that it was essentially the same among all Ituri Mbuti, but that it differed from the religious concepts of the neighboring villagers though it was influenced by them. Schebesta asserts that the belief in a personal God is based on the notion of vital force. God possesses the totality of this force and distributes part of it to worldly beings. Thus God is regarded not as a transcendent creator but rather as a person who lived long ago. He is sometimes confused with the first ancestor and may be represented by the moon.

The confusing abundance of names and terms used by the various Mbuti is partly due to the different languages spoken by both Mbuti and villagers, and partly to villager influence, but it in no way denotes any fundamental difference in this basic concept of a personal God accompanied by the belief in a vital force.

[P.188-D]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[ARCHERS]

[P. 189-A]

000 his basic concept of a personal God accompanied by the belief in a vital force.

114 Schebesta (1950) bases his detailed study of Mbuti religion on an eight-month sojourn among the southeast archers on his second visit to the Ituri. He also mentions other information collected during his two visits which is of relevance to the net hunters and the Kango farther west. Here we are concerned only with his archer material.

The Chthonic God

796 Among the Efe archers Schebesta found the
192 name Toré, applied to what he designates as
184 "*Buschgott*," or God of the Undergrowth. Other names frequently heard are Muri-muri, Mbali, Muku, Kalisia, Bi'i, Ba'atsi, Epilipili, Puchopucho, Matu, and Lodi. Like Toré, Muri-muri is found among all archers. Those to the north describe both Toré and Muri-muri as a small, Mbuti-like forest dweller, to meet whom is death because he is the destroyer of all. The central archers distinguish more clearly between Toré and Muri-muri. The latter, who is short in stature, is sometimes termed Toré *bo'ichu* (Costermans, 1938, Toré *bo'iko*). The former is,

Is Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

on the contrary, tall, and wanders through the forest, striking the trees as he moves about. According to some of these central archers, the mother of Toré is Mato (Matu), who lives in the mountains, and his father is Pucho-pucho; according to others, his mother is Ou-ororo, and his father Ogbi-oro, names which, according to Schebesta's linguistic studies, contain the words for fire and menstrual blood. The Chthonic God is, under many of his names, referred to as the original possessor of fire (as is the chimpanzee). Among the southern archers the possessor of fire is Mbali, and Bali is fire itself. These southern archers also regard Toré as lord of the world and creator of all things. For this reason they make offerings to him of all their products from hunting and gathering. (In this region the term Lodi is replacing Toré.)

All Efe agree that Toré sends death. The southern archers believe this because they disobeyed his command to refrain from following and spying on him. Others say that Muri-muri had confined death in a pot, which he gave to a toad with instructions to take the greatest care of it. But the toad gave it to a frog who leapt away with it and broke it, thus letting death escape.

[P 189-B]

[ARCHERS]

shout of joy. The wife of the elder then took the carcass and invoked Bali and the ancestors, asking them to give their children game again. The dead chicken was then given to a woman married into another band who, together with her children, ate it. This woman's son, a nephew of the band concerned, built a small hut (*sa'a*) near the elder's hut, and placed in it the heart and liver of the chicken; the head was stuck on a stake above. The elder made an invocation for game to both Bali and the *hefe* (sprites).

Schebesta came across this ceremony twice, once at Rodjo and once at Maseda, identical each time except for minor differences. Certain details, he claims, are borrowed from the villagers, such as the use of a chicken, which the Mbuti do not raise. He thinks that the sprinkling of blood is also foreign but that nonetheless there evidently was once an indigenous ceremony for opening the forest, involving the offering of the heart and entrails of game.

This practice of invocation and sacrifice to the "*Buschgott*" is held by Schebesta (1950, 209) to be the most significant feature of Mbuti religion, distinguishing it clearly from the religion of the villagers who have no cult to the forest God.

Cotermans (1938), however, believes that the word "Toré" cannot be associated with "God," that the *toré* association has no religious

[P. 190-D]

1: Turnbull E-4. 9 (1911-1969) 1969 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[ARCHERS]

[EP.191-A]

function, any more than has the whole ritual of initiation. *Tarí*, according to Cotermans, is, if anything, a spirit cult. The *tarí* are spirits of the dead, known under different names such as *tarí bo ichu*, *tarí bo iko*, *tarí bo itu*, and are clearly differentiated from the godhead. Sacrifice to Tarí may take two forms, writes Cotermans, *tarí lusi* and *tarí luka* (*lusi*, invoke; *luka*, throw, offer), and is practiced more by Lese villagers than by the archers, who practice it only rarely, for the hunt. Cotermans, far from denying that the Mbuti possess a notion of God, affirms that they do, as do the villagers, but insists that it is dissociated from the *tarí* cult described by Schebesta.

Death and Afterlife

The Pygmy notion of soul appears complex and confused to Schebesta (1950, 90; 1952, 332). He attributes the confusion to heavy borrowing from the villagers, the Mbuti originally having little interest in life after death. There is a distinction between body, shade, and soul, respectively, *ela* (or *edo*), *tedi*, and *boru o'i* (or *borupi* in Efe). The Lese villagers make the same distinction. Breath, *ekou*, is a vital force, extinguished at death. The Mbuti believe that shades become *bofo*, or forest sprites, and the villagers claim that they become *ibdi* or *kiti*, phantoms.

Ir Turnbull E-4. 9 (1951-1958) 1958 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

411

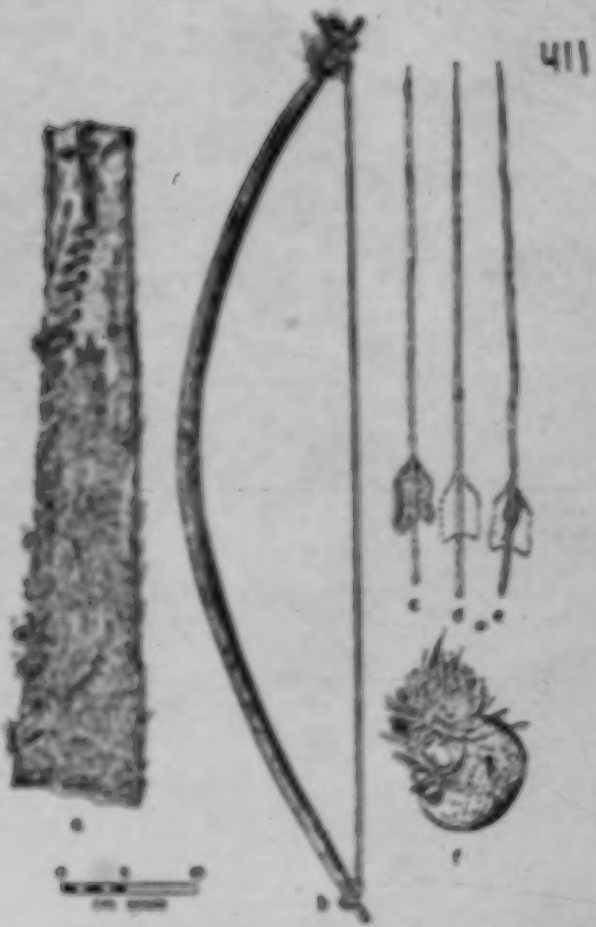

FIG. 37. Hunting equipment, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri. a. Skin quiver, *kaka*. b. Bow, *mangi*. c-e. Arrows, *epi*. f. Wrist protector, *aruka*. The bows, arrows, and wrist protectors of the net hunters are notably shorter than those of the archers but are only of secondary importance in the food quest. The net hunters prefer poisoned arrows to those with metal tips (see Figs. 38–39).

[192]

[84]

[P 204-D]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

575 561 89 [594] [224] to status in the band and the fact that young men, as yet unmarried, who have displayed particular prowess as hunters may take a prominent part in *molimo* activities. In the absence of any detailed information on formal initiation into the *molimo*, we can at least say with some certainty, from the available material, that among the net hunters membership is associated primarily with hunting skill.

575 796 With regard to the proceedings of the association, all reports from this district indicate that the *molimo* is held only on occasions of the greatest importance to the community: various crises, and particularly death. A fuller account is given elsewhere (Turnbull, 1960b, 307–340); a summary is given here.

534 [192] The word *molimo* is used to denote the association, its proceedings, and a musical instrument. Only one instrument is reported by the Putnams as being used—the *molimo* trumpet. But Anne Putnam, in her notes, mentions having heard the trumpet one night and thinking that it sounded very different from the one she had heard some months previously. It is possi-

[P. 225-8]

1: Turnbull E-4. 8 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

There seems to be a very vague belief in a malign force similar to the *ada* described by Schebesta (1948, 527 ff.), and for which the net hunters use the villager term, *ulosi*. It is generally associated with very old people and with cripples who, not through any malevolence but rather because of their condition, may cause death. If someone is thought to be possessed of *ulosi*, he may be put to death. The Putnam material records the Mbuti as beating one old woman accused of being a *losi*. She was prevented from being beaten to death by Putnam's putting forward an effective argument as to why she could not possess *ulosi*. This same old woman, however, died two years later following an epidemic in a camp where she was staying, and where two Pygmies died. The old woman died when the camp was broken, before they reached the new camp, and no explanation was given. She certainly had not contracted the disease. Putnam mentions other instances of the disappearance of people, particularly the aged and crippled.

In legend the *losi* are accredited with being the most gluttonous cannibals, devouring corpses in the middle of the night. Apparently, if a Pygmy wakes up and sees a *losi* feasting on one of his comrades, that person will merely become sick. If the *losi* is not seen at his (or her)

[P. 240-D]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

INTELLECTUAL AND ARTISTIC LIFE

184 53 There seem to be no significant points of divergence between archers and net hunters under this heading, except in theory and interpretation of their rationale. In music the archers make much more use of instruments than do the net hunters. Schebesta does not give details of the types of archer song such as given for the net hunters, which does not mean, of course, that such a classification into sacred and secular, for men and for women, does not hold [121] equally well among the archers. It is simply one of the many points on which we need more field data, and it may prove to be an extremely important point when it comes to trying to unravel the contradictions, implicit and explicit, in the material on religious life.

RELIGIOUS LIFE

721 184 114 Here, as in the previous section, the similarity of fact is far greater than the dissimilarity, though this may be obscured by the contradictory nature of various interpretations of the facts. It is here that Schebesta's work is more open to criticism, as it is here that his bias is strongest and here where the material most easily lends itself to interpretation in the light [575] of bias. Costermans (1938) raises an extremely important question when he questions Schebesta's assertion that the *toré* society is an in- [192] [776] tegral part of the religious system of the archers and that Toré is applicable as a term for God.

[P. 248-B]

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

rest-house or with other Europeans. Mr. and Mrs. Putnam had long established their own *bona fides*, and indeed fitted perfectly into the traditional village structure in this area, where a number of different village tribes converge. Their friendship for me placed me on a particularly favorable footing with both the villagers and the Mbuti, and I knew that I could count on protection from any interference from other Europeans, administrators included, who might wish to visit me. (Naturally I established perfect accord with the central and local administration, who offered every co-operation, but I was particularly concerned that I should not receive "friendly visits," as it was the policy of both villagers and Mbuti, for different reasons, to keep Europeans out of the forest.)

Having established my headquarters, building a somewhat larger but otherwise typical mud house on the fringe of the village where the Mbuti had their semi-permanent village camp (see Plan 1A, 1B), I paid my respects to the divers local village chiefs and head men, mostly of the Bira, Ndaka, and Ngwana tribes. At this time the local Mbuti band was in the village, but a sudden epidemic of stomach disorders, resulting in a number of unexpected deaths, caused them to leave for a prolonged hunting spell in the forest, taking me with them.

While the deaths, which included men, women and children, were most untimely and unhappy from a personal point of view, they achieved everything else that I could have wished for as an anthropologist. Prior to precipitating the flight back to the forest, they gave me an opportunity to study in the greatest detail the reaction to the death of an Mbuti in the village, both from the village point of view and from that of the Mbuti themselves. I at once witnessed what I had seen on my previous visit when observing the *nkumbi* initiation; namely, the almost desperate attempt of the villagers to assert authority over the Mbuti. In this case the attempt was made by controlling the mourning and burial proceedings, claiming that the Mbuti had no ritual authority in this respect and were dependent on their *kpara* ("masters"). The villagers attempted to subject the Mbuti to the supernatural sanctions of village lore, and then they attempted to assert more direct political control by calling on their own ritual specialists to determine the cause of the deaths, and to search for the witch responsible. This will be described later (pp. 74 *seq.*); it is mentioned here to show how closely I was thrown into contact, at the outset, with the Mbuti/Villager relationship.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

to rule if the ceremony is to be effective, whatever its purpose. By "festival" I mean something rather different. It in no way necessarily implies an annual or regularly recurrent event; its objectives may be precisely the same as those of a ceremony, but the means employed are different. There is no precisely regulated pattern of behavior. On the contrary, there is an important element of spontaneity that gives the occasion a vital immediacy, keeping it in the current context rather than connecting it with the past. I confess that the term "festival" has, for me, other less easily definable connotations that make it more suitable for use in the Mbuti situation, the most important of these being that it implies wider, freer participation, less pomposity and more enjoyment, an abandonment that is almost subversive with respect to the commonly accepted norms of behavior.

Most important, I have to revoke my earlier usage of the term "Essumba" or "Lusumba" (Turnbull, 1955, 1957[1], 1957[2]). The context in earlier writing, I hope, makes it plain when I am referring to a magico-religious festival of the Mbuti as distinct from a ceremony practiced under the same name by the villagers. The misleading terminology employed before my last field trip was due in part to the difficulties of the linguistic situation and the fact that I was then using the lingua franca, KiNgwana, as my major means of communication. The importance and significance of the confusion will appear later in the text, but as I now wish to use a terminology that will clarify the situation as much as the actual linguistic confusion permits, I have to state that wherever in the past I have referred to the magico-religious festival of the net-hunting Mbuti, in which the men play a predominant part, and where I have used either "Essumba" or "Lusumba," it would have been more correct to have used the term *molimo*. Even this term, however, has its counterpart in the Bira *molimo* ceremony, but at least we can now distinguish more easily between both of these and the other local ceremonies known variously as *essumba*, *lusumba* and *ishumba*, which ceremonies are connected primarily with the Ngwana villagers and their earlier slave-trading and ivory-collecting practices.

One last small correction of past usage; whereas before I once or twice (Turnbull, 1955, 1957[1]) used the spelling *Alima* for the festival associated with the puberty of Mbuti girls, I now use the form and spelling *elima*.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4 •
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

is usually applied by the African to causal relationships he does not understand but which he still believes to be pragmatic. The mechanism exists, just as surely for the African as for the motorist. Whereas the term "magic" implies, for the Westerner, supernatural intervention, its African counterpart, for villagers and Mbuti alike, has virtually no such connotation. Some "magical" activities are not given any special term other than that for the activity itself. Those that are classified apart as a special type of activity are thought of as *curative*, and the classificatory term indicates effective function, not supernatural intervention. It is in this sense that we use the word, and in this sense alone that it should here be understood.

Witchcraft, on the other hand, introduces other elements, although it is still basically thought of as a scientifically explicable phenomenon, involving certain supernatural powers conveyed by the possession of witchcraft substance, something that can be touched and seen but, being located in the entrails (details as to exactly where, and what it looks like, vary), cannot be removed except at death. But whereas the existence of the powers is explained by the substance, the nature of the powers themselves is inexplicable, therefore supernatural.

Sorcery is akin to witchcraft only in that it involves the possession of similar powers. But whereas with witchcraft the powers depend upon the existence of witchcraft substance in the body of the witch and are controlled by that substance, the powers of the sorcerer come to him, or her, through the exertion of willpower, and are therefore controllable by the individual. A witch acts only as such when forced to do so by the substance. A sorcerer acts as such when he wishes to, for whatever purpose he chooses. There is, naturally, a complete terminological distinction between the two in the various local languages: in the lingua franca of the area, KiNgwana, the term *chawi* is used for witch, *lozi* is used for sorcerer. These terms do not necessarily correspond in their usage to the same terms in other Bantu languages, and there is a significant difference between village and Mbuti usages of each term. Needless to say, in that an individual possessing witchcraft substance is not directly answerable for his actions, however grave, he is not considered antisocial. But as a sorcerer directs his power for individual ends, he *is* considered antisocial, and is therefore culpable.

Religion, as used here, refers to the realm of belief where there is no attempt to explain supernatural powers in terms of empirical experi-

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

tion de chasse. This curse, which was of leprosy, was never lifted, to my knowledge, and caused some uneasiness among the Mbuti but mainly anger. So far it has not been effective, either in obtaining the money for André or in bringing leprosy to the Mbuti.

The other case involved the headman of the nearby Ngwana village, who claimed that three Mbuti from the Epulu band had taken a sack of rice from him and had promised meat in return but never sent it. He allegedly employed a sorcerer to curse the Mbuti to death if they did not send the meat. Within a matter of three months all three had died. Two died evidently of stomach disorders that might have been due to or aggravated by poison, which is sometimes used by the Ngwana; the third man died a long way off in the forest under conditions that would make it unlikely that the death was due to poison, though quite likely it was due in part to fear. All three were young and healthy.

There were almost certainly other instances that I did not hear of, where it was claimed that sorcery had actually been used. There were innumerable instances when it was threatened, and also innumerable instances of accusations of witchcraft involving Mbuti. In fact, talk of village witchcraft and sorcery was among the major topics of conversation in forest camps, particularly just prior to and following a visit to the village. Although the Mbuti had no beliefs of their own concerning the manipulation of such supernatural powers, and although they were reluctant to believe that it was more than either a hoax or, as most of them put it, the mere stupidity (*mbafu*) of the villagers, it nonetheless occupied their thoughts. The death or sickness that inevitably followed a curse, happening sooner or later to someone in the same family, was generally accepted by the Mbuti as coincidental no matter how hard the villagers tried to relate it to the curse; but the occasional exceptional instance, such as that quoted, when the three Mbuti died within three months, was enough to cause serious doubt and fear.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

with which the body of the villager is treated before burial. Owing to my somewhat peripheral relationship with the villagers I was not allowed to witness the more intimate rituals when the *karé* Mbuti was closeted with the deceased on one occasion for about three hours, on another occasion for one hour. Nor was I able to elicit much from the Mbuti, who said that they knew nothing about it, and only did what they were told to do by the villagers. When asked what that was, they repeated the above information, which was as much as I had gathered from the villagers, and no more except a few colorful and imaginative details about the appearance and odor of the corpse. This being clearly something better investigated from the villager side, I did not press the matter. It seems sufficiently well established, however, that the ritual connection between *karé* is considerable as seen by the villagers, and this was borne out on one occasion when an important Bira noble died and the entire funeral ceremony, including the burial, was held up for a day and a half because of the non-appearance of the dead man's Mbuti *karé*. On this occasion the Mbuti eventually arrived on the run carrying a spear, loudly shouting his complaints at being brought from the forest for such stupidity (again the term *mbafu*). There were several hundred villagers assembled, and the Mbuti ran through them to the compound of the deceased. He evidently knew in advance what was expected, and broke his way in to the closed hut where the widows were wailing. There was great concern among the villagers because he took his spear with him, and they said he might kill the women, but they did nothing to prevent him. Happily there was a full complement of widows at the subsequent burial.

The villagers recognize that they cannot force the Mbuti *karé* to fulfill their obligations by political or economic pressure, but they now have another weapon. By the act of ritual circumcision, according to tribal lore, the Mbuti are placed in a direct relationship with the tribal village ancestors, and by the *karé* bond each Mbuti is placed in a direct relationship with the protective spirits that look after the welfare of their respective individual villager partners. Every step of the *nkumbi* reinforces the authority of the tribal ancestors, through the supernatural powers at their disposal, over the Mbuti as well as over the villager initiates. Failure to fulfill "kinship" or *karé* obligations on the part of the Mbuti cannot be dealt with by the legal mechanisms available to the villagers, but it can now be countered by supernatural sanctions. Villager lore defines the Mbuti responsibili-

ties to villagers, and villager supernatural sanctions enforce fulfillment.

From the Mbuti point of view, however, the whole *nkumbi* is *mbafu* (stupid) and *bulé* (empty), and so are the sanctions. The initiates and their "fathers" who attend them during the ceremony take every opportunity to mock the procedure (Turnbull, 1957[2]), and as stated earlier the *nkumbi* in no way alters the status of the initiates back in their forest world, where they are still regarded as children. In all the *nkumbi* that I have witnessed in different parts of the forest, among different tribes, with varying proportions of Mbuti/Villager initiates, and under divers degrees of severity of village control, I have not seen one indication of genuine respect or belief on the part of the Mbuti, and not one instance of the initiation having the slightest structural relationship to the Mbuti forest world.

Yet by undergoing the *nkumbi* the Mbuti place themselves in a position of ritual inferiority and subordination to the villagers. They do not have any ritual specialists of their own to perform the *nkumbi*, so are wholly dependent upon the village doctors. As the *nkumbi* only perpetuates the status differential, it gives the Mbuti knowledge of tribal lore but does not grant them access to mastery of the lore. Not being full kin, but only adopted, parallel kin, the Mbuti can never qualify as ritual specialists, and are therefore at once forced by the *nkumbi* into participation in innumerable other tribal rituals, and at the same time denied any measure of ritual control and placed in a position of still greater dependence upon the villagers.

Once again the villagers cannot conceive of life without the necessary ritual observations, and in a sense they feel an obligation to provide these services for the Mbuti, but the Mbuti avoids actual dependence by adopting only the outer form of the institution, not the system. Insofar as we are discussing the village world, however, from the villager's point of view the *nkumbi* places the Mbuti in the greatest possible condition of dependence by creating an obligation to take part in a ritual life in which he will need village ritual specialists. It also provides the villagers with the surest method of control, through supernatural sanctions. The villagers have such belief in these sanctions that they are content to allow the Mbuti to get away with much trickery, convinced that sooner or later the score will be evened and restitution made.

Having drawn the Mbuti into the world of the village supernatural, because it *is* of the village, the villagers feel they have established ultimate if not immediate control.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

bers of each age level may be *apua'i* to each other doubly underlines the importance of this age grouping as a structural principle of their society, because it not only effectively allies members of the same age group, but it cuts across any unilineal descent pattern. Even though, if pressed, any one *apua'i* can and will trace his relationship to almost any other, through either cognatic or affinal lines, among themselves this is never done. The functions of the age group, also, have little to do with kinship.

The age group forms the next unit above the nuclear family, each having its own functions and its own sphere of authority. Above the age group one might consider the band to be divided into alliances of age groups, though their function would be less easy to define. However, such alliances do take place, generally in major disputes, where youths and children might ally against hunters and elders. Characteristically, disputes concerning premarital sexual activity, betrothal and *bopi* (playground) activity are the major occasions for such alliances. But the same element may be seen at work during the religious *molimo* festival, where the group of adult men that sing around a fire at night may divide the hearth into two or three fires. The unmarried youths nearly always have one fire for themselves around which they dance their erotic dances; the hunters (the younger married men) may have a fire of their own, or they may join the *mangesé*, the elders, men who are no longer as active in the hunt as they used to be.

Young married couples are held responsible for reproduction, but only to a limited extent for the rearing and education of their children, for beyond the age of three or four a child becomes the responsibility of the band as a whole. As an economic unit the family is divided into the appropriate age groups as a co-operative part of the total band. Effectively much of its economic activity is directly for its own individual benefit, but there is nearly always some sharing even when there is no necessity for sharing, to emphasize the communal rights to forest produce. As a political unit the family only has internal jurisdiction of the most minimal kind. The punishment of a wife or a child, or the complaint of a child about its parents, quickly becomes a matter for communal discussion. As a religious unit the family is of little significance indeed. But every nuclear family is expected to participate in religious festivals, as symbolized when the *molimo* hearth is made up by taking embers from every family hearth, and when a camp is moved each family carefully takes an ember from

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

spread totem is the leopard, and even those who do not have the leopard as their clan totem, and can therefore lawfully kill the animal, say they would never eat the meat. Some give the reason that the leopard eats human beings, and in this way anyone eating a leopard is also eating human flesh. Whereas insofar as clans themselves are suspect as being possibly of village origin, so are the totems, and indeed totemic observance itself. But there is no doubt that the leopard is throughout the forest considered by the Mbuti as having supernatural connotations. More of this will be seen when we discuss the *molimo*, the men's religious association, which is active primarily at the time of death of a member of the hunting band. The derivation of the term is unknown, and it has no translation, but *moli* is the word used by the same Mbuti for the leopard. The animal is considered beautiful because of the grace of its movements, and in this context it is likened to a dancer. It is respected for its power and skill as a hunter. It is feared for the way it brings death, to animals or human beings, swiftly and silently and inevitably. There are many who do not claim the leopard as their totem, but who nonetheless would not even touch a dead leopard, let alone kill one or eat it.

The chimpanzee and the buffalo are probably the next two most commonly given totems, and they are also animals that have the least possible interest among Mbuti as a source of food. The chimpanzee because, they say, it is nearly human, and the buffalo simply because it is such bad eating. Other Mbuti who may eat these animals seldom do. Buffalo is tough and unpleasant-tasting, they say, and is eaten only if there is nothing else. Also, any sensible Mbuti will seek to get out of a buffalo's way rather than to challenge and kill it. There is no merit in killing a buffalo, as there is in killing an elephant. To seek one out is considered a foolishness, the mark of a stupid and conceited hunter. To be attacked by one and to escape are considered a sign of good luck; if the buffalo is killed in defense, however, that only brings incidental fame. If, as sometimes happens, a buffalo is constantly making a nuisance of itself in a particular part of the territory that cannot always be avoided, and presents a real danger to hunters and gatherers, then five or six of the great hunters will set out to kill it, with considerable trepidation. It is above all an animal to be avoided for every possible practical reason.

The chimpanzee, on the other hand, is avoided for more personal reasons, largely associated with its semihuman appearance. Someone who does not like to eat chimpanzee will also be likely to refuse to

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

It is significant that the honey season should be marked among the Mbuti by a special type of song, musically distinct from the other types, and by a ritual dance involving ritual use of fire. I have seen this dance throughout the forest, and heard the same distinctive honey song, the latter being made all the more distinct by the use of special wooden clappers called *ngbengbe* by the net-hunters of the Epulu region, *epopo* or *koko* by the archers further east.

Many different kinds of honey are recognized, and each has its own distinctive taste. All that I tasted were exceptionally sweet except for the *apuma* honey, which is very liquid and highly fermented by the time it is collected late in the season. Most honey is found high up in boles in the upper branches of the tallest trees. This is always collected by men and youths who can climb trees, unless the diameter is too great, simply by exerting lateral pressure on the trunk with their arms while they move their feet up, pulling themselves close to the trunk with a jerk as they move their arms up. If a tree is too wide to climb this way, they may loop a vine around it, holding the ends with their hands, or they may climb a smaller tree nearby and jump across where the branches meet higher up. Hollow trunks or branches are used by bees as hives.

Other honey is found a few feet above ground level, again in a hollow tree trunk, and this is the only kind of honey, except for the rare *sundu*, which is found in the ground, that a woman may collect.

The actual collecting procedure is the same. If the entrance to the hive is small, it has to be widened with an ax. Then a leaf tube in which there are smoldering embers is introduced into the hole, and by blowing through the other end, the Mbuti fills the hive with smoke and drives out the bees. Most of the bees do not sting at all, and those that do sting do not seem to cause any great pain. Even before they have all left the hive the collector puts his arm in and pulls out handfuls of honey, eating it on the spot, sharing it with friends who may be helping him. When they have had their fill they throw down what is left to those waiting below. If by themselves, they fill a special bark honey container or a basket lined with leaves, and bring the rest back to camp. There it is shared by all, either being eaten in the comb or warmed in leaf containers over the fire. If it is full of white maggots it is particularly prized, and will almost certainly be warmed to loosen the honey until the maggots wriggle, at which point it is consumed with relish.

If the honey is very dirty, full of rotten bark or leaf mold, it is wrapped in a leaf container and immersed in water. When it is pulled

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[P.181]

CHAPTER 11

Government: Internal

INTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

Before attempting to understand the over-all system of government in Mbuti society, it is necessary to distinguish between different fields of authority, for each field of activity has its own leaders, drawn from a particular segment of the community. It is in this way that authority is dispersed throughout the band; every adult is accorded special respect in one field or another, but none can claim respect in all fields. Individual authority is unthinkable, and not only are there no chiefs or headmen in Mbuti society; there are not even any councils of elders or any ritual specialists such as prophets or diviners. Such adults as have respect in any particular field at any particular moment do not even have any authority; they can merely claim to be heard. Their decision is likely to be given general assent and, as in economic matters, that decision is then said to be "good," and "pleasing" to the forest. The forest personified as a benevolent divinity remains as the only recognized authority, one which sometimes expresses its feelings with unmistakable clarity; an excessive storm, falling trees, poor hunting and ill health may all be taken as signs of displeasure, while good weather and good health and good hunting are indications that all is well. But often the forest remains silent. Then the Mbuti have to sound its feelings out through discussion. Dreams may be taken into account, but there is no question of waiting for visible signs of the forest's pleasure. The delegation of authority is clear; the decision of the whole band, the very fact of unanimity, is sufficient sign of the favor of the forest. There is always diversity of opinion, freely expressed, but prolonged disagreement is considered as "noise," and offensive to the forest. Unanimity, therefore, is a powerful and positive value, equated with the opposite to noise—quiet, or *ekimi*.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

year. While Manyalibo's crime was serious enough, desecrating the forest in the honey season by hunting for the villagers, Masisi's was equally, if not more, serious, in his attitude to the trespassing bands. The night before Cephu joined him, Masisi was made the subject of discussion, from the middle of his own camp, by several youths and young hunters. They all asserted the right of their in-laws to enter their own territory, to hunt or gather honey, whether they were wanted or not. They agreed that permission should have been asked first, but that in light of the surplus of honey in the forest it was hardly necessary. The discussion ended by everyone agreeing that all the noise[8] of the past weeks was plainly the fault of the villagers who wanted the meat that caused the rift to begin with. This decision was followed by a plea from Masisi for much singing to make the forest happy again. The honey songs were immediately taken up with renewed vigor, and Masisi was prominent in maintaining them right to the end of the honey season.

6. Largely through preoccupation with Cephu, Manyalibo and Herafu, with the Effundi Somali band and now yet another trespassing band from the neighboring Eboyo territory, Masisi's camp had several days with little honey and little food of any kind. All men in the group took turns in stating their complaints from midcamp, each promising to find out who was responsible and threatening to name them. On the fourth successive day of such "noise," the singing having deteriorated, much to the disgust of the youths and the women, Masisi was particularly irritable and began a long harangue about how bad the whole thing was, including his present camp, and saying that he could name those who were responsible for it all being bad, but instead he was going to name those who must go out the next day and collect lots of honey and make it well again. He then named all the hunters. But he continued arguing and, getting more and more irate, began to imply that those he had just named were in fact those responsible. There were growing murmurs of protest, which only excited Masisi further, and there would almost certainly have been a fight had it not been for the intervention of the youths and the young women. Two of the women and one youth seized the *ngbengbe*,

[8] "Noise" is a direct translation of the word *akami* in the local dialect of KiBira, or *kelelé* in KiNgwana. It is used in ordinary parlance, but always with an unfavorable connotation. It is given special significance by adding the comment that noise is bad (*sinana*). This is tantamount to a moral judgment, invoking the supernatural sanctions of the forest, for noise is also said to kill the forest (*akami a mu ndura*), just as it is said to kill the hunt (*akami a mu mukira*).

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

village itself was being pressed by the administration to increase its productivity at the same time that it was being pressed to supply the administration with more labor. In turn the villagers tried to press the Mbuti into supplying them with more food. Accustomed to a bare subsistence economy, the Mbuti could never quite see the necessity, nor did they altogether feel it was right or that it would be pleasing to the forest. Their belief, as far as I could determine, was not so much that they would be punished by the forest, but rather that the hunt would "be closed," that they would not get the unlawful surplus, that they might not even get enough for themselves.

To counter this the villagers offered divers kinds of medicine[9] for use in the forest, and agreed to make even more powerful medicine in the village. Sometimes the villagers offer to come into the forest, with a ritual specialist, to make medicine. The Mbuti tend to allow this, as it is profitable to them. Occasionally, however, the habit lingers, and whether or not *anjo* was originally a village or an Mbuti custom, it is now considered as a village trick, and disliked as such. *Anjo* is made by taking an antelope horn and filling it with a paste made from special parts of the antelope, charred black. This paste is then applied with a stick to the body of the hunter, to convey to him the senses of the animal.

This custom could sit perfectly well among the archers, where hunting is on a more individual basis. But among the net-hunters its use was taken as a sign of desire for personal gain above communal gain. On one occasion, when the hunting was not particularly good, *anjo* horns were rounded up from all over the camp, eight in all, and destroyed in the central fire. There was some protest from the owners, but not much. It was generally agreed that this made everyone the same, and that was how things should be.

From all the above, and from the rest of the disputes recorded in my notes, totalling 124, not counting the petty daily squabbles of no apparent import other than as an indication of bad temper, one of the most significant features is the small number of cases in which any

[9] Among these medicines is that encouraged by the Arab slave traders in search of ivory, specifically to give success in the elephant hunt. Known as *esumba, ishumba,* and divers other spellings, it is sometimes confused with a love medicine of the same name, and even more frequently with the *molimo* of the Mbuti, the word *essumba* or *lusumba* being used to describe the Mbuti *molimo* when speaking in KiNgwana, language of the Arabized Bantu tribe. It is perfectly possible that the two practices became intermingled, both, from the Mbuti point of view, being concerned with the pleasure of the forest.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

having been there they do not know what it is like, and not knowing what it is like they cannot predict what their behavior will be. They say that to try and go into the future is to "walk blindly," and their response to villagers, missionaries or any who claim a knowledge of afterlife is to say, "How do you know. Have you died and been there?" They liken such discussion to the talk of a hunter who suggests hunting in a certain place without ever having been there, or a woman who goes off in a set direction to gather a certain kind of mushroom without having seen them growing in any particular place there. These are people who act "emptily," or whose heads are loose and not properly attached to the body.

However, this disclaimer to absolute knowledge of the nature of the future or of afterlife is in itself a characteristic that I found to be universal among the Mbuti, at least within my own experience. This did not prevent individuals from having ideas about the unknown, but as already indicated, such speculation was considered as fruitless, and took the form of legend and was listened to with interest, and often with amusement. Such speculations, whether spontaneous or in the form of established legends, do not reveal any consistency in detail, which appears to be a matter of individual imagination, but there are broad areas of belief that seem widespread among both archers and net-hunters.

There is a belief in a power greater than the Mbuti themselves and not of the natural order of the world they see and know around them. Insofar as this is stated to be a belief, and not knowledge, it may be considered a spiritual power, the spirit being a level of existence that the Mbuti do not claim to understand but which they see as necessarily existing in order to explain the nature of the world's unknowns. Again the terminology is hopelessly confused, the Epulu Mbuti using, in one instance, no less than five terms interchangeably—*pepo*, *keti*, *boru*, *roho*, *satani*. These terms are drawn from Lesé, Bira, Ndaka and Ngwana, among which tribes of villagers they are also to some extent interchanged, each change bringing a different shade of meaning. For the Mbuti they do not indicate clearly differentiated elements that make up the physical and spiritual being of man, but rather indicate this basic belief that man himself is in part spiritual and that his life derives not from the flesh but from some other source. All five terms are used equally to denote this personal force. But each one is also used to denote different aspects of that force, and the Mbuti usage again in no way coincides with that of the villagers,

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

PEPO

The life force that animates all moving, living things, without which they would be mere vegetable growths, unable to move or think. The word *pepo* also has connotations of air and wind, and breathing is thought of as a manifestation of *pepo*. A gale of wind, then, is interpreted by some Mbuti as the breath of the forest itself (*pepo nde ndura*), as the breath of the disembodied spirits, or *keti* (*pepo nde baketi*).

KETI

Disembodied spirits, human and animal, who are not necessarily the spirits of the dead but may be independent manifestations of the forest, and who are disembodied only in that they are invisible to the Mbuti. They have an existence otherwise comparable to that of the Mbuti, and are likewise animated by *pepo*. There is no conflict of interests between them and the Mbuti, though occasionally the two worlds inadvertently become confused. An Mbuti may be in hot pursuit of an animal that suddenly disappears; he is likely to say that it must have been *keti*. An animal mysteriously drops dead; it was killed by a *keti* hunter (*keti a mu'e*) who thought he was in pursuit of a *keti* animal. Hallucinations and dreams are primarily the result of accidentally slipping from the one world into the other. All such meetings of *keti* and Mbuti are regarded as abnormal, and are never deliberately sought. They do not exactly induce fear, but there is undeniably the belief that one might cross over so effectively that one would never come back. The Mbuti say that if this happened you might not even know you had crossed over, which indicates that they conceive of the *keti* world as a mirror of their own.[1] Dreams, then, do not convey authority as being divine portents but, being real experience of a mirror world, they are, like all experiences, to be learned from. Thus Ambosu dreamed constantly that he was singing into the *molimo* trumpet. This did not give him the right to take up this role,

[1] On two occasions I heard *ekokomea* described laughingly as a dance of the *keti*. The dance, involving a reversal of the sexes, is primarily associated with the *molimo*, hence with the spirit and supernatural world. There is a hunting dance in which there is a rapid succession of changes in direction, the hunters becoming the hunted and vice versa. Yet another instance of Mbuti recognition of reversal is seen in the legend of the Mbuti plantation (see Chapter 12), in which the Mbuti are the cultivators threatened by the animals of the forest (elephants), who undoubtedly represent the villagers.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

but everyone agreed that it was a clear indication that he should try. He became the leading trumpet singer, then, not through divine choice but simply through his experience in the *keti* world. He was not regarded as more spiritual, merely as more experienced. However, insofar as both Mbuti and *keti* derive their *pepo* from the forest, if the forest wills them to hunt together in the same time and place then the mirror images coincide exactly and it is, indeed, a "strong" hunt. Such coincidence is exhausting, however, and it is not something actively wished for except, possibly, in times of particularly poor hunting. Ideally the Mbuti and the *keti* should follow each other closely, but always remain just slightly apart.

BORU

A rather difficult concept of the "house" (*endu*—the same word as for a hut) inhabited by *pepo*. The human and animal body of flesh and blood is, in a sense, *boru*, and so is the invisibility of the *keti*. It is a term seldom used, but the concept affords a firm basis for a code of respect for the body, abuse or mutilation of which may drive away the *pepo*, causing "death" (which for the Mbuti is simply the departure of *pepo* and its return to the forest or the world of *keti*). Thus physical violence as a means of settling a dispute is abhorred as a sacrilege. A sound thrashing is perfectly in order, but any violence that produces blood causes an opening through which *pepo* may escape. For although associated with air and wind and thus with breath, it is not thought of as *being* any of these things, and its exact means of escape is unknown. The bodily apertures are all regarded as requiring attention, however, as possible avenues. It might be pointed out here that insofar as *pepo* is associated with life and may escape through these apertures, this is perfectly consistent with the Mbuti recognition of the sexual act as a means of conveying life, though they do not explicitly refer to semen as *pepo*. It is also consistent with the variations on the sexual act found in the *ekokomea* dance, where not only are the sexes reversed but attention is drawn to the less usual apertures, to be somewhat delicate. The role of *ekokomea* as a major feature of the death festival becomes immediately more understandable, its burlesque form allowing for the stated antipathy of the Mbuti to the unproductive forms of sexual perversion *ekokomea* so graphically depicts.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

ROHO

The personality of the individual dies with the body and is the combination of a particular *boru* and *pepo*. It is associated with the heart and is spoken of as being hot or cold, sometimes as noisy or quiet. Hot and noisy are generally bad qualities, cool and quiet are good. But properly controlled heat and noise can be useful, though dangerous, for both are sometimes thought of as being "strong." The state of an individual's *roho* may be cited as justification for his actions, and nobody can gainsay him, for it is bad to go against one's *roho*. However, a man or woman who is constantly calling on his or her *roho* to justify antisocial acts such as laziness or quarrelsomeness may be said to have a bad *roho*, and will be shunned.

SATANI (also *Shaitani*)

This is a concept derived from the villagers, and is for the Mbuti more in the realm of folklore than belief, for *satani* are, to the villagers, malevolent and dangerous forest spirits. The Mbuti use the term in this sense only when recounting a village tale or a tale concerning villagers, for they essentially disbelieve in such evil spirits. However, they sometimes use the term, particularly if talking in Ngwana (to which language it belongs), as synonymous with *keti*. An additional complication: When talking in Bira, they may use *keti* (a Bira word) in the sense of the village Bira, which is the same as the Ngwana *satani*, or evil spirits. However, in the forest context there is no concept of *keti* or *satani* as conceived by the villager, the only spirits being the *keti* as described above, invisible mirror images of the Mbuti themselves, no better and no worse. (Conversely, in the village world all the spirits of the forest are malevolent and dangerous; there is no concept parallel to that of the Mbuti concept of forest spirit.)

THE GODHEAD

As the Mbuti themselves strenuously refuse to admit there is any sense in trying to describe what we here call "the godhead" unless you have seen it, there is not much sense in our trying to do so. Rather, by looking at various aspects of Mbuti life we can discern the exis-

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

imba nde bonga'i). The positive emphasis on *ekimi*,[4] or quiet, is in no way thought of as being in conflict with song, for *ekimi* is cool, and so is song, and both are pleasing to the forest. Song is in no way associated with noise, though both are recognized to be sound.

There is no such thing as secular song among the Mbuti. Songs sung by the Mbuti in the village, apart from being quite different in musical form from those sung in the forest, are spoken of as "empty sound" (*s'uti bobo*) or even as "noise." There are distinct musical forms for distinct occasions of importance in forest life such as hunting, honey gathering, puberty and death. The absence of any specific Mbuti form for village events, including *nkumbi* initiation or village-arranged marriages, is an indication of the lack of importance of these events in the forest life of the Mbuti.

There are, apart from the four major types of song listed above, two other types that are less formalized, but which are considered more in the nature of "sound" than "song." One is the lullaby, which is an individual creation (unlike any other forms of song, all of which require group participation), and the other is the play song, accompanying hoop-jumping, skipping or divers other rhythmic games.

Of the four major types, two concern economic activities and are sung on the appropriate occasion, each involving men and women. The other two are more directly religious in nature, being concerned with puberty and death, though the field of each is somewhat wider than these precise moments in the life cycle. The puberty songs (which have nothing to do with the *nkumbi*, not being sung on that occasion and in no way resembling the village songs that *are* sung at that time) concern primarily the women and youths (male and female), and are first learned and sung at puberty but may be sung at other times similarly critical to growth, birth and marriage. (Normally *elima* songs, or puberty songs, are sung at birth only if there is some special concern over the child's welfare, and at marriage only if it is desired to consecrate an otherwise "empty" marriage taking place in the village. Then not only is an *elima* song sung but leaves are brought in from the forest, and the bridal couple are completely surrounded by them to indicate that they are, in fact, joining together in the forest.)

Death songs are normally sung at the death of an adult, male or

[4] *Ekimi* is the word most frequently used in this band for quiet. Like many other words it is a dialectal form, in this case of the Ngwana word *kimia*. In KiBira the equivalent would be *kobia*.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

ful analysis by competent musicologists.[6] As described, the above divisions represent divisions recognized by the Mbuti, and visible in differences of musical form. There is sometimes an additional category stated, that of the elephant-hunting song, which seems to overlap both the ordinary hunting song (specifically referred to by the Epulu Mbuti as a net-hunting song) and the *molimo* song. In view of the possible elephant symbolism in the *molimo* festival, this could be of importance, though not enough is known at the moment of the elephant-hunting song to properly assess its position in the system. In this respect it should also be remembered that the Ngwana term *esumba*, or *lusumba*, frequently used by the Mbuti in the forest context as synonymous with their *molimo*, was originally for the Ngwana in the nature of elephant-hunting magic.

All songs share the same essential nature, sharing the same power of sound. The sound "awakens" the forest, in Mbuti terminology, and the nature of the song indicates the particular area of interest of the Mbuti at that moment, thus attracting the forest's attention to the immediate needs of its children. It is also of the essential nature of all songs that they should be "pleasing to the forest."[7]

Rather more magical in nature, perhaps, is the way the Mbuti use other forms of sound than song. A sudden noise of any kind is considered "strong," and generally bad; an isolated hand or arm clap, or a single loud shout, will bring complete silence to a camp or to a hunt. Whistling is considered very "strong" indeed, but here the word

[6] It is interesting to note here the elephant-hunting significance of the Ngwana *esumba* ritual, and the linguistic confusion between *esumba* and *molimo*. Frequently, I have seen in the forest the remains of what seems like the model of a spear-fall, and have always been told that a *molimo* had been held there. Most often such sites were in old, deserted camps, once or twice (particularly in archer territory) on the trail.

[7] Pahlen (1949) gives an excellent general background to the primitive concept and use of music, though his acceptance of the sounds of nature as symbols of supernatural powers is not demonstrated. He points out (p. 18) how in ancient cultures music went hand in hand with religion, "the synthesis of wisdom, beauty, kindness and solace." He is referring primarily to countries with "highly developed cultures," but much of what he says is applicable to primitive society. It is certain that an acute analysis of Mbuti music would reveal much that parallels the structure of Mbuti society. The extraordinary level of polyphonic achievement is surely related to a highly developed individualism that would hardly tolerate the confines of unison. The Mbuti musical categories of *berai* and *imiai*, chorus and solo song, indicate a system of recognized relationships between the group and the individual, and the technique of *hoquet*, already mentioned, further mirrors social relationships. Such considerations, however, should not obscure Pahlen's major point that music also mirrors social values. It is an analytical tool, requiring little musical training, that has been much neglected by anthropologists, and it is hoped that a systematic analysis of Mbuti music now being undertaken at Columbia University will provide data from which not only may further light be shed on Mbuti society, but from which may emerge the beginnings of an ethno-musicological methodology.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

"strong" has the same double meaning that it has when used to describe song. In using either the Ngwana term (*nguvu*) or the Bira term (*mota*), the Mbuti may imply difficulty as well as sheer physical strength. A sudden noise that is *mota* has an inherent power of its own. A song or whistle has power only if it is properly performed. The proper performance is not so much the following of a prescribed pattern, though there may be and usually is such a pattern, if general, but rather the transference of *pepo* so that by contact with *pepo* the song or the whistle becomes *mota*. Singing or whistling not so touched with *pepo* is "empty noise," and doubly bad. Whistling is widely used to arrest action of any kind. In everyday life, whistling brings the movement of all hunters and beaters to an immediate stillness and stops all sound among them. The sign for them to continue is an imitated animal cry. In the camp, if someone thinks he hears a foreign sound—of approaching people or game, of a "crying" tree (a tree starts creaking some days before it falls, and this is referred to as "crying")—he whistles to call for silence so that all may listen and hear. During the *molimo* songs, particularly, but during any song, also, whistling softly brings the song to an end. A sudden storm is likely to bring shrill whistles, though nobody claims to even hope for them to stop the storm, though they all say it is worth trying. They explain that whistling is effective in other realms because it is the affair of the Mbuti, but it will not stop a storm because that is the affair of the forest.[8]

All such whistling is done with the lips. Whistles are also made of seeds and carved from wood, however, and though the seed-whistles are purely for children to play with, the wooden whistles (*piki*, *segbe*) have special usages. Rarely, a small whistle may be attached to a net, and although functional it is never blown. Similar whistles are used by those net-hunters who build a hunting fire in the camp, and are placed within the vine circle surrounding the fire, again not blown. Larger whistles made of two semicylindrical sections of wood and bound together by vine or *nkusa* twine, tapering to a point at one end (left open so it can be stopped with a finger) and notched for blowing at the other end, are sometimes attached to a fur cap worn by hunters, and may be blown before the hunt, possibly during a hunting dance. Similar whistles made of *angbe* wood, from the *angbe* tree that provides most of the honey, are used during the honey season

[8] Cooper (1941, 24 seq.), in drawing comparisons between the Semang, Andamanese, and Eta, finds much similar interest in noise.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

621 591 181 101 103 value (though an individual generally knows and therefore feels at home in one territory more than in others) so much as a group value. The stated concern of the Mbuti is not to perpetuate lineage but to perpetuate the band, and bands are not only defined but named by territory. Individual camps are given specific names according to their locality. *Apa toangbe* is the camp under the *toangbe* trees; *apa* Lelo is the camp by the Lelo River, and so forth. It is significant that when referring to another band it is generally referred to by its current camp name, or the last camp name known, rather than by the more general name by which its whole hunting territory is known. This implies a recognition of the changeability of the composition of the band, and an emphasis on what the band is at any given moment, defined by the particular part of its territory it is hunting at the moment.

621 131 224 602 628 Practical considerations of territory are that birth in a territory conveys the right to hunt with that band throughout life, and it generally conveys a sentimental attachment to the territory that may well act as a stabilizing factor. Cognatic or affinal relationships may be utilized to acquire the right to hunt in other territories, but one then becomes a member, if temporary, of the band in which one is hunting.[4] But it is when one widens the concept of territory, so that it implies more than a mere area defined by boundaries, that the notion acquires its most fundamental importance. As a definable area it is of economic and political significance in providing the framework within which hunting by different bands can take place without danger of shortage or need for conflict; it is also of social significance in providing a symbol of band unity, and the promise of continuity. But 192 the term used by the Mbuti for territory is the same word used for forest, *ndura*. Regarded in this light, territory assumes vastly added significance.

621 186 When an Mbuti says "This is our forest" ("*Nde ndura ndasu*"), he may be defining the territory of the band in which he is a current member, or he may be defining the Mbuti as against the villagers. 222 Alternatively, if in the honey season among the net-hunters, he may 131 be defining the territory in which his particular subsection of the band

594 [4] This again is an example of different degrees of kin relationship being recognized but not made explicit, because explicit recognition would alter the distance between the individuals and so disturb the *apua'i* relationship. Once in the new camp, the visitor is assimilated into the age-level system of that band regardless of the nature of his kin relationships. In giving his reasons for making the visit, either to his own band or to the band he is visiting, an Mbuti will not spell out the relationship but will most likely use the personal name, coupled perhaps with the appropriate generational term. The term alone would plainly not indicate clearly enough whom he was going to visit.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

the elders is to restore *ekimi*, or quietness, and also, following their alternate generation, to play and sing, if in a somewhat different manner. The elders may also flirt.

Above all, each age level has its own responsibility in the total band economy.

3. TERRITORY is the principle by which the band, divided horizontally by age, sees its unity vertically, through all four generational levels. Territory, represented by the hearth, recognizes the divisions of the band from the nuclear family, represented by the family hearth, to the four age levels, represented by the different hearths at the *kumamolimo*, for youths, hunters and elders (children remaining by the family hearths). Territory, represented by an area enclosed by recognizable boundaries, defines and is the symbol of unity of the band. In its widest extension, the forest itself, territory forms the basis for the unity of all Mbuti in their common opposition to the village world. The village world is frequently referred to as *indenji aku*, or in the lingua franca, KiNgwana, as *inchi ingina*—directly translated as "another territory." Each band has its own *indenji*, and intermarriage between noncontiguous bands is preferred because of the rights it conveys, each to the other's territory. The Mbuti themselves say it is good to have relatives (friends) in many camps, for then one never "walks emptily" (*tamba bulé*). One of the great *molimo* songs is "*me tamba bulé*"—"I am walking emptily." The importance lies not in the initial or future residence of the married couple, but in the exchange relationship established by their marriage, enabling individuals or families of each band to exchange visits with members of the other, never having to "walk emptily."

For the Mbuti territory in its widest aspect, as the forest, also represents the spiritual source of their entire being, and effectively operates as the ultimate sanction of social behavior.

4. NOISE, or *akami*, is another element of structural significance, and must be considered in relation to its counterpart, *ekimi*—quiet. Noise is recognized as having considerable practical significance, such as its effect in scaring away animals. This can be desirable or undesirable, depending on the situation, and so can noise be desirable or otherwise. Ultimately, however, noise kills, and so generally is to be avoided. It may be used in times of danger or crisis for protective purposes, and apart from shouting to frighten away wild animals while on the trail, the Mbuti also whistle to stop all human sound, in

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

deavor of this kind, however, is recognized as being fraught with difficulty, and there is another way that is both easier and more sure, for *ekimi mota* is produced by song. The process of "rejoicing the forest" is a process of creating *ekimi mota* where it does not exist, of intensifying mere *ekimi* through song.

The term for "rejoicing the forest" in the Epulu area is *bongisa ndura*. In KiNgwana the verb is either *furahisa* or *ponisa*, there being no precise equivalent to *bongisa*. *Furahisa* is closer to the English concept of joy, involving festivity; *ponisa*, however, means to cure. The KiNgwana words are both used by the Mbuti in this context, interchangeably, and the meaning of *bongisa* lies between them, derived as it is from *bonga*, meaning good, in an all-inclusive sense.

Perhaps the exact connotation of "rejoicing the forest" is best described by the process itself, which brings joy through joy. Singing gives the Mbuti intense satisfaction. They say it makes them feel good, in the sense of feeling joyful. The mood of song is joyful, even when it is a *molimo* song on the occasion of death. By creating a mood of joy within themselves the Mbuti convey that joy to the forest, which returns it, restoring *ekimi* or even *ekimi mota* to the camp. To describe song as mere "curing" would not quite cover the essential sharing process implied by the term *bongisa ndura*. Song is known, to the Mbuti, to have the infallible power of filling the forest with *ekimi mota*. It is sometimes described as being like the act of copulation in the moonlight, or wherever the individual talking feels that act to be the most intense and beautiful. The Mbuti say *"su bongisa ndura, ndura pisu ekimi"*—"we rejoice the forest, the forest gives us quiet." The distinction is simple, for joy is *ekimi mota*, an intensification of *ekimi*, and as such is not the norm and can only be temporary. Far more important to the Mbuti is that they should have, on a less temporary if less exalted level, the norm of *ekimi*.

While the forest cannot fail to be rejoiced by song, it may well, for one reason or another, be displeased, as a father may be displeased with his children (a perfectly common Mbuti metaphor), and withhold *ekimi* for a long time. The fact that singing brings joy to the Mbuti, filling them with *ekimi mota*, does not mean that it is not also hard work. For the forest is not content with one song. If singing is undertaken at all, and particularly if it is undertaken for purposes of restoring lost *ekimi* (i.e., if it is to be a *molimo* festival), it must be long and continuous. After a fest of singing every night, from shortly after dusk to an hour before sunrise, the Mbuti set off to hunt

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

(empty), *mbafu* (stupid) and *mota* (in the sense of dangerous) as assessments of all village institutions and beliefs. A certain amount of this ridicule is again a part of the joking relationship, but it is significant that the Mbuti do not frequently accuse the villagers of being *sinana*, "bad," however much they might refer to the village itself as a "bad place." From the forest standpoint, however, there is no question but that the village system is singularly inapplicable, and therefore at least *bulé* (empty) and possibly *mbafu* (stupid), if not actually *mota*, or dangerous. The village does become *mota*, and very much so, the moment it impinges upon the forest, and any villager in this situation becomes truly *sinana*, or bad. But as seen, in forest life even *akami* can be turned to good use, and the noise of village life, while in itself definitely not good, can be turned to advantage. In the same way that *akami* is the duty of hunters in the forest, as a means of resolving disputes, or at least bringing them into the open, so may *akami* in the village be used as an institutionalized means of resolving a dispute without settling the blame on any single Mbuti. Thus individual villagers, village demands, or village allegations of witchcraft or sorcery can all be invoked to explain what could otherwise only be explained by Mbuti delinquency. Individuals or families who are under criticism, openly or covertly, may decide to go to the village to fulfill some obligations to village *karé* or *kpara*. The village generally is a place for relief from the tensions of forest life, and by bringing their *akami* to this center of *akami* the Mbuti often hope to shed their own internal dissensions. The village is associated with "war" (*vita*).[8]

In the sense of constant interpersonal conflicts, there is no doubt that for whatever reason an Mbuti band reassembles after a stay in a village, it is likely to reunite in the forest with considerably more *ekimi* than it possessed on leaving. In the same way that individuals leave a forest camp for a visit to the village because of *akami* (probably of their own making), so whole bands move to the village when

[8] *Vita* is, strictly speaking, a KiNgwana word, but is invariably used by these Mbuti, as are some other words of the same language, even when speaking in KiBira. A future study of such usages might reveal significant connotations in Mbuti thought. Certainly the wars still uppermost in the minds of the Mbuti, as of others in this region, are those of the Arab slavers, whose pawns the Ngwana were. Similarly the KiNgwana word *bulé* (empty) is used far more than its KiBira counterpart (*bobo*) when the implication is particularly derogatory. Thus *kelele bulé*, which is all KiNgwana, means empty noise, a phrase that might be used to describe a dispute that has no just cause. If an Mbuti were to refer to a dispute as being *akami bobo*, it would have a similar connotation. However, if he said *akami bulé*, it would no longer describe a merely pointless dispute, but one that is both without just cause and with deliberate hostile intent. In fact the odium of *vita* clings to almost every KiNgwana word, as does that of *mayelé*, or trickery.

wrong, or fondle him and feed him with delicacies if he is quiet and gives them no trouble. He knows his real mother and father, of course, and has a special affection for them and they for him, but from an early age he learns that he is the child of them all, for they are all children of the forest.

When a hunting party goes off there are always people left in the camp—usually some of the older men and women, some children, and perhaps one or two younger men and women. The children always have their own playground, called *bopi*, a few yards off from the main camp. At Apa Lelo it was on the shore where the river twisted around an island and one branch of it cut in almost between Cephu's camp and the main camp. The water was fairly shallow there, and all day long the children splashed and wallowed about to their heart's content. If they tired of that, they had a couple of vine swings in their bopi; one was a small one for younger children, and the other was hung from two tall trees. Infants watched with envy as the older children swung wildly about, climbing high up on the vine strands and performing all sorts of acrobatics.

There were always trees for the youngsters to climb, and this is one of the main sports even for those not yet old enough to walk properly. The great game is for half a dozen or more children to climb to the top of a young tree, bending it down until its top touches the ground. Then they all leap off at once, and if anyone is too slow he goes flying back upward as the tree springs upright, to the jeers and laughter of his friends.

Like children everywhere, Pygmy children love to imitate their adult idols. This is the beginning of their schooling, for the adults will always encourage and help them. What else is there for them to learn except to grow into good adults? So a fond father will make a tiny bow for his son, and arrows of soft wood with blunt points. He may also give him a strip of a hunting net. A mother will delight herself and her daughter by weaving a miniature carrying basket. At

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

me and finally brought us down to a swampy region, dark and dank. 114
A stream flowed through the middle, fed by innumerable tiny rivulets from the hills all around. We picked our way across, balancing on fallen tree trunks and jumping from log to log. As we began to climb a steep hill on the far side I heard the telltale sound of bark cloth being pounded into shape, the cheerful shouting of women as they called to each other while they finished the building of their huts, and an occasional outburst of song, sung for no other reason than that this was the honey season, the season to be happy, the season to rejoice. Kenge gave a loud whoop of pleasure and darted [152]
among the trees like a young antelope, leaping and bounding out of sight. When I reached the clearing he was already sitting down, his face buried in a sticky mongongo leaf dripping with rich brown honey. He looked up and laughed.

The camp was called Apa Toangbe, the *toangbe* being a special 36
kind of honey tree. It was built halfway up a fairly high hill, on a [192]
patch of ground that was not quite level. Masisi's house was at the highest point of the tiny clearing, with Asofalinda to one side and Maipe's mother to the other. Masamba had built a house that virtually joined onto that of Masisi. Mine was halfway up the slope on the other side, facing across to Maipe. It was all ready when we arrived, the only one completely finished. Masisi proudly led me to it and inspected it with me. He had built the bed himself, carefully [352]
refraining from turning the ends of the branches up sharply as Pygmies seem to think should be done, so that the bed becomes the shape of a hammock without any of its back-saving resilience.

It was not thirty feet from one side of the camp to the other, and 000
the forest closed in a protective wall all around us. Kenge and I set off to see what the surrounding country was like, and soon we were far beyond the sounds of any voices other than our own. Everywhere we went we saw mushrooms and nuts and berries, and we collected

224 have little game they will keep on until nearly dark.

There is a difference in value between net positions in a net hunt. The central position is best because it catches the most animals, and the flanks are the worst. [192 193] The pygmies have a whole vocabulary to express the details of net hunting, including a whole group of verbs for net setting in various positions. There seems to be some rule about who sets his nets in which spot, but this has not been recorded.

If a big animal, like a buffalo, comes toward the nets, the men will try to get them down and let him rush through, for they do not want to foul and tear the nets or to encounter the dangerous animal. If the large animal does strike the net, however, it may delay him long enough for the nearest man to rush up and spear him.

Most of the animals they catch are no larger than a dog or goat; for example, a kuchinda is about that size. The hunter cuts its throat and carries it around his neck, with hind and front legs on opposite sides. The average day's bag is about half of an animal of this size per man. If they have caught an okapi, however, the hunter cuts it up on the spot, and they cut small lianas to tie up the pieces with. The women also will carry some of it in their baskets. Almost always the meat goes directly to the camp after a hunt, where it is divided. Only after this will the share of the Negroes be carried to their village.

[481] **Bow and arrow hunting.**—In bow and arrow hunting, the pygmy relies not on his endurance but on his ability to move through the forest silently; that is his greatest skill and greatest asset. He can track an antelope to a thicket where it has lain down to sleep, and shoot it from five yards' distance before it wakes up. He shoots machine-gun style; he will pump five ar-

[P. 329-B]

776 water, the people, will say, "It was the water animal that did it." Sometimes the water animal comes up out of his native element and assumes the form of a rainbow.

821 172 From time to time the Negroes and the pygmies find neolithic axes, which they say are "turds of lightning," excreta dropped in the process of the storm; when lightning splits a tree, one of these turds is always left.

776 The pygmies also believe in totemic spirits, which live in spirit places—in rock piles, hollow trees, and holes in the ground; classic *genii loci*. On their account, the pygmies refuse to go near certain rocky hills, on which there may be dense thickets. If a pygmy is out hunting with a white man, the white man may say, "Let us beat in there; there is game in that thicket." The pygmy will reply, "No Bwana, don't go in there; that hill is full of *sitana*."

[192] The word *sitana* is the local Swahili or Kingwana equivalent for the Arabic word *shaitan*, plural *shayatin*.

Ritual Activities

789 821 **Weather magic.**—One class of weather ritual involves the use of physical symbols taken from the context of situation—leaves, which wave violently and are blown down in a storm. Schebesta [2] describes a simple ceremony of this kind in an Efe camp. During the height of a storm the oldest man in the camp came out of his house and stood in front of it. He brought with him leaves and ashes. First he threw most of the ashes upward into the wind, then he smeared ashes on a leaf, rubbed some onto his own body, and threw the rest into the wind.

Other methods mentioned by Schebesta are the burning of certain leaves,

[113] [2] Schebesta, P., *Among Congo Pygmies*. London: Hutchinson & Co., 1933, p. 243.

[P.337-A]